

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claim 9, claims 10 to 15 and 20 to 22 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for immediate allowance, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claim 12 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Regarding the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, although it is believed and respectfully submitted that “rare earth metals” as recited in claim 11 provide sufficient antecedent basis for “the rare earth metal” as recited in claim 12, to facilitate matters, claim 11 has been amended herein without prejudice to change “rare earth metals” to --a rare earth metal--. The Final Office Action indicates at page 2 that the foregoing amendment will overcome this rejection.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claims 14 and 15. In this regard, the Examiner will note that each of claims 14 and 15 has been rewritten herein in independent form. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 15 are in condition for immediate allowance.

In addition, claims 10 to 13 and 20 now ultimately depend from claim 14. As such, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

Furthermore, claim 21 has been amended herein without prejudice to refer to claim 14. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 21 is in condition for immediate allowance.

Since claim 22 refers to claim 21, which has been amended herein without prejudice to refer to claim 14, it is respectfully submitted that claim 22 is also in condition for immediate allowance.

IV. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Regarding the rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a), although the merits of these rejection are not necessarily agreed with, to facilitate matters, claim 9 has been canceled herein without prejudice, claims 10 to 13 and 20 now ultimately depend from claim 14, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, claim 21 has been amended herein without prejudice to refer to claim 14, and claim 22 refers to claim 21, which now refers to claim 14. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that these rejections are moot, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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